

1574
A Scriptural

A N S W E R

T O

Mr. James Walder,

AUTHOR of

The Ax laid to the Root; or, a Preservative
against the erroneous Doctrine of the
METHODISTS, &c.

Candidly offered to the

CONSIDERATION of all CHRISTIANS.

IN THREE DISCOURSES.

By J O H N W E S T.

He that is spiritual, judgeth all things, yet himself is judged
of no man. 1 Cor. ii. 15.

If by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is
no more grace. Rom. xi. 6.

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Heb.
xiii. 8.

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A Scriptural

A. N. S. W. E. R.

TO

Mr. James Walder,

Author of

The Ax laid to the Root; or, a Treatise
Against the erroneous Doctrines of the
Arianists, &c.



Cambridge: Printed by J. Sturges, at the University Press.

IN THREE DISCOURSES.

By JOHN WEST.

The first is entitled, 'The Root of the Arian Error
traced to its source, and its effects on the
Church of England, and the Christian world, in
general, and the Church of England, in particular,
examined and exposed.'

LONDON:

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P R E F A C E.

Dear READER,

I Humbly present the following discourses in the most legible, easy, and intelligible method, considering the infirmities of your flesh, and lest your faith should stand in the wisdom of man, and not in the power of God. Indeed it may be observed, that I have but little genius to wisdom of words, or propriety of expression, neither will my conscience let this be my study; for how vain, yea and sinful, is it to muse upon that which is even foolishness with God? Nay, how can it be expected that God should bless our endeavours, when it is exerted contrary to his word and will? But it may be objected, that variety of words, and emphatical expressions, are more pathetic and moving to the affections. But alas! this all grows cold and ineffectual by frequent using; for you know a word of simplicity from an honest heart is more regarded by an honest man, than the most assiduous application of a known flatterer, equivocator, or dissembler: for my own part, I heartily wish honest simplicity was more in fashion. Methinks our learned divines, that esteem the humility of Christ and his disciples, should endeavour to mitigate this flatulent disorder, and teach more intelligibly the simplicity of the gospel. The learned might diminish and allay this destructive wisdom; whereas if the illiterate only discommend it, they will be accused and rejected of the arrogant world, as not knowing any better; and therefore their prejudice will become an obstruction to their learning, and a snare to their souls. I would not have my reader suppose that I speak against this sublimity of speech, because I am sparing of my pains, or because I have no rhetorical taste, or the like: for I can assure him, my nature would be very fond of the opportunity to set forth my own wisdom, &c. was it not restrained by grace, and with a deep sense of its robbing God of his glory. My nature is such (with the rest of mankind) that I should like to be esteemed wise, good, and righteous, was it not invalidity to my Maker's glory, and destructive to my own soul. But
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since I am told by my Lord and Saviour, that 'he which humbleth himself, shall be exalted, &c.' how dare I presume to take any glory to myself, when I so often acknowledge it is due only to my Lord and Maker, 'who putteth wisdom in the inward parts, and giveth understanding to the heart.' 'Nay, saith our Lord, how can ye believe, (i. e. in his salvation) which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh of God only?' Since Christ hath made this interrogation, it must needs be time to ruminate the matter, and consider whether we seek the honour which cometh of God only, when we seek the applause of men. For my own part I dare not walk this path, for it leadeth to destruction; I dare not climb this way, for it is not entering in by the door, (which is Christ) and all which do not, are thieves and robbers; and I know that 'no man can come unto the Father, but by him.' I dare not use enticing words of man's wisdom, 'lest the cross of Christ should become of none effect.' (1 Cor. i. 17.) Therefore I conclude (as did the apostle) that Christ is made unto such as believe, 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.' (1 Cor. i. 30. Jer. ix. 24.)

Let us be content then (as we would make the word of God our rule and conduct) to walk in this plain garb whilst on our journey, since we have that inestimable white robe, (Rev. iii. 18. vi. 11.) that wedding garment, the garment of salvation, Christ's righteousness, to be invested with, so soon as we arrive at our desired haven, the celestial city. Surely, reader, you cannot say nay to this, though we are called Enthusiasts, Methodists, Mad-men, false Prophets, antichrists, modern Teachers, and the like. If you would know the truth of this defamation, and whether these names are justly imputed, I know no better method than my adversary has accidentally advised you to in his title-page; that is, resign yourself wholly to do the Lord's will, that you may 'know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' (John vii. 17.)

Perhaps it may be thought by the man of this world, that I have answered my opposer with some inveteracy and censoriousness: but I can safely affirm, I owe him no
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grudge; for I know not the person; but I thought myself under an obligation some time to answer him closely, for his own sake, and the public good; that they may take the more heed not to fall in the same erroneous principles or destructive errors. I thought there was great need sometimes to take up the prophet's example, and put some ironical jokes upon my adversary, as he did on the children of Israel when he told them to cry aloud unto Baal; (1 Kings xviii. 27.) for in truth, I thought his folly was much like their's discovered.

I know the universal prejudice of mankind against such as are called Methodists, though in reality it be for no other reason. Satan indeed has cast many execrable darts at the children of God, and caused many reproachful scandals to spread abroad; but nevertheless, such as are of an unprejudiced and impartial temper, such as are not willing to keep up a false report, will endeavour to know the truth, and submit to the apostle's instruction, and that is, to 'prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.' (1 Thess. v. 21.) Would to God the people were all like the Bereans; that is, 'to search the scriptures daily, to see whether these things are so.' (Acts xvii. 11.) We do not desire people to be ruled by our bare words, but to search for themselves, nay we recommend such as more noble. With what reason, truth, or justice, then is it, that we have so many nick-names given us? Why, that the scriptures might be fulfilled, 'If we were of the world, the world would love its own, &c.' but because we will not follow their pernicious practices, therefore the world hateth us. People indeed may very pertinently say by us, as they did by the primitive christians, We know that this sect is every where spoken against. And no marvel, for the apostle tells us, that (not only some, but) 'all that live a godly life in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.' (2 Tim. iii. 12.)

Some indeed are so vain as to call us false Prophets which come in sheep's cloathing, &c. yet they are so inconsistent with themselves, that they greatly complain of our hard doctrine. Surely this is not coming in sheep's cloathing.

Others are so stupid, invective, and malicious, as to call us Antichrists, &c. though they say, we hold so much with what Christ has done for us, &c. that it becomes li-

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centious doctrine; surely if this imputation in this latter respect was just, the former appellation must be conscientiously excluded: for holding too much with Christ (as they vainly suppose) can never be putting ourselves in the room of Christ, but to the direct opposition; neither can it be denying the power of God: all which the word Antichrist implies. But alas! what will not a prejudiced, virulent disposition avouch and presume? No name can be too reproachful! though indeed it confirms the apostle's scriptural paradox, that every man's heart (whilst in the flesh) lusteth to envy.

Again, they will call us modern Teachers, &c. though we hold with the articles and homilies of the church, and other antient authors; when they themselves are departed from their antient and sworn principles, and are teaching new doctrine! But alas, because they keep to the same building, (called, the church) the ignorant will often make this insipid plea, I was brought up to the church, and to the church I will keep! and all this is without once considering the doctrine they hear there delivered.

Again, there are many will affirm by us, as they did by the apostles, that we say, 'let us do evil that good may come; and (if I may use the words of the apostle) their damnation is just.' (Rom. iii. 8.) But I shall be careful to make the same interrogation the apostle did, Are we any better than they? Nay in no wise, but through preventing grace. Therefore let him that has received it, be assiduous in self-conviction, and careful that he does not glory as though he had not received it. (See 1 Cor. iv. 7.)

This is the energy and exposition of the apostle's argument. For if we have nothing but what we receive from the immediate hands of an immense benefactor, (notwithstanding the blessings are great) we have no room to boast; but let those that glorieth, rejoice in him of whom they have received the promise of glory, in a blissful state of eternal felicity. This world is not a state of glory intended for the creature, but a probation of humility and love to the creator: and if ye would be influenced by the intense command or insuperable example of the captain and author of your salvation, learn this grand lesson: 'he that humbleth himself as a little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' This is a preparative that is highly

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highly needful, and ever is previous to the reception or participation of the gospel. Christ makes a particular interrogation on this topic, shewing the impossibility of man's believing, if so be he receives honour unto himself. (See John v. 44.) Nay, saith he, in another place: 'Verily I say unto you, They have their reward;' and in vain do they thus seek any other.

Having your heart, dear reader, thus submissively con-
signed to the love and honour of your benefactor, I may reasonably expect his blessing to attend my sincere and impartial endeavours; yea I can assure my reader, this is my ardent desire; and if this be the happy consequence, I desire no greater result from my labours; nay, this is the greatest I expect. But alas! my greatest perplexity is to consider, what a dissolute and heedless world this treatise is entering, and how few (even of such as will read) concern themselves to know and understand; nay, though it be the things which belong to their peace. Surely they are insensible that by their negligence they are deceiving their own souls. (See James i. 22.) Surely they are ignorant of that invective threatening Christ pronounced against such as repent not at the preaching of the gospel: 'Yea I say unto ye, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of judgment, than for that city;' viz. their punishment shall not be so intolerably great as theirs which have had the offers of grace, and the light of the gospel presented unto them, and yet have shut their eyes and stopped their ears against so inestimable a benediction. But alas! how many will applaud themselves and appease their consciences by reading some considerable stint in the Bible, whether or no they understand what they read? they understand that God hath commanded them to search the scriptures, &c. and therefore they think they have done their Lord a great deal of hard labour, if they have made any considerable progress in their Bible; when alas! it is all for themselves, and can do God no service at all. They think the Almighty indebted to them for reading or hearing his word, when in reality they do not regard it; but if St. James's word be warrantable, 'they are deceivers of their own selves.'

Others there are that will make this frivolous and unavailable exception and excuse: If they know much, there

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will be the more required. So they are content, with the unprofitable servant, to hide their talent, thinking their Lord an austere, hard, and thrifty man; so they make the same plea that the sloathful servant did: and the same will be their fatal sentence—‘take them, bind them hand and foot, cast them into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ O be persuaded, dear reader, (if you have any regard for your own soul) to evade the sentence.

But alas, say some, the scriptures are inconsistent: we are commanded in one place, ‘to stand fast, and be unmoveable;’ and in another, ‘to be careful that we are not blown away by every wind of doctrine;’ and in another, ‘to prove all things, &c.’ so that how is it possible we should know which to heed most? Alas, my friend, I have not time nor opportunity, nor is it consistent with my intended brevity, to answer the many objections deluded souls will make to the word of God; but I shall only call upon you to exercise your own reason, and this objection will be immediately answered. You know it is not the duty of such as are ill-grounded to stand still in that place, lest their sandy foundation should give way; therefore it is such are exhorted to stand fast, who are placed upon that unmoveable rock St. Peter’s faith: (Matt. xvi. 18.) by which perfection, all that attain it, are made free: so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. You know it is inconsistent with reason, to think the apostles should bid these stand in their own principles that are in a state of nature, and in enmity against God; this would be to re-establish their condemnation, and make their covenant with hell the more secure. Astonishing doctrine this, far from fleeing from the wrath to come! But I presume it will be an affront to my reader’s judgment any longer to dwell on this theme.

Others will make this objection and say, there are so many opinions in the world, and each so confident they are in the right; how should we know which to adhere to or follow? Why, I answer, this is an objection not altogether censurable; for it is enough indeed to stagger any one that puts his confidence in man, or that takes the best of examples from man for his rule and conduct. For as none are free from deficiencies, so none that makes this the rule
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of their deportment shall be free from destruction. God has a right and prerogative to demand his government, and therefore hath commanded us to trust in him, and his word. 'Yea, saith the prophet, cursed is the man that trusteth in man, who maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.' (Jer. xvii. 5.) Why then should we be so in love with our own ruin; to bring ourselves under so heavy a curse? the Lord never deceived any that trusted to his word wholly; for 'none that trusteth in him shall be desolate.' There are variety of opinions amongst men; but it is each man's duty to follow that which he thinks most agreeable to the sacred word; knowing this, that God is true, though every man be a liar. The apostles' decision of light matters was this: 'Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind.' If you make this your rule and pattern; that is, to do your best in what the word of God does not determine, I fear not but you will soon be made a profelyte, and an heir to the promised inheritance; and if, on the other hand, you deviate from this example, God's own word denounces your destruction; for damnation is your doom, except ye repent (not only of one sin but every one) and believe the gospel of your salvation. This is God's word, and surely, if you are offended at it, your hearts are not right in his sight. This is the word that is spoken, and the same, says Christ, shall judge ye at the last day.

Perhaps my reader will see himself condemned by my doctrine; and I tell him beforehand, if this be the case, it is the Lord's invocation and call to repentance; and though he may see nothing but threatnings now belonging to him (because his case requires it) nevertheless in this same treatise, when sincere repentance has had its due effect, these threatnings will be extricated, and the promises redound with double satisfaction to his wounded soul. I know the world seek after a warrant to sin with, but I can give my reader no such permission, unless I go for the devil to project it. But my doctrine is this: All are utterly condemned by the law of God; and therefore says Christ, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' 'Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord, and I will turn unto you.' And the blessings that result therefrom are known only unto them that have experienced the love of God shed abroad
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in their own hearts; and to such only are the words of Christ exemplified, (Matt. xix. 29.) and they shall receive an hundred-fold even in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. It is nothing but for want of faith in these and the like promises that keeps people from this happiness of a peaceable conscience in this life, and everlasting happiness in the life to come. For 'this is the victory, faith St. John, that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

But the word of God will remain as a dead letter, till the Spirit of God breatheth life into the soul. People may get a knowledge in the head, that the word of God says so; but the heart remains unaffected. They are such as are neither wrought upon by mercies, nor terrified with judgments. This indeed is somewhat owing to carnal ministers, who use all their exhortations and applications only for fashion sake, without being enlivened with a sense of what they speak or write of themselves. Nay, it is improbable that the hearers should receive any real compunction or remorse for their sins from their doctrine, when it is evident and obvious to the hearers that they say and do not, like the Pharisees of old. Alas for them, the Almighty hath declared that he will even curse their blessings—Yea saith he, 'I have cursed them already, because they lay it not to heart.' (Mal. ii. 2.) For my own part, (though I am extremely weak) I can safely affirm, I have not used any argument, exhortation, or motive, beyond what the language of my heart expresseth. My desire is ardent as Job's, and my request is the same, that my doctrine might be written with an iron pen, and deeply engraven on your hearts. (Job xix. 23. Jer. xvii. 1.)

I hope I need therefore make no apology for publishing this treatise as a vindication to our principles, and as (my adversary pleads, "a preservative against the errors of our day." I am deeply sensible of my incapacity for so great a work as answering controversies, any farther than the word of God determines the matter, (and indeed I think none are capable for this); and I have therefore made this my rule and pattern: that, together with my own experience, I am so confident I am in the right, (with respect to materials) that I can triumphantly make use of our Saviour's parole to his disciple, it is such that the world cannot gain say nor resist.

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I have not written my own word as a confirmation in any point whatsoever, but have the peremptory word of God to determine the case. Heaven and earth is therefore called to witness to confirm my doctrine; whereas my adversary has not one scripture-determination against me. Nay, it is observeable our opposers can use nothing but dialectical arguments to all their propositions; and the reason is evident, because they dare not alledge a positive scripture for a decision: for it surely proves a confutation to their doctrine. And mark this, dear reader, this is an omen of our seducer's doctrine—When they alledge any scripture, it is not to the purpose; it is such as doth not determine their propositions, and can only serve for the blind and ignorant to conclude it is truth, because they see it is something relating to the scriptures, but remain entirely ignorant of its meaning.

I can but mention a modern seducer, who, in a letter to one of his parishioners, who was inclined to turn Methodist, &c. makes use of a multiplicity of scriptures, but they are such as very compleatly confute his own doctrine. Indeed he has been very crafty in mentioning many scripture names of persons, &c. to prove his own doctrine, but has forgot to let the people know where to find them; therefore they have nothing but his bare word to rely upon; and that is manifest to the judicious believer, to be nothing chiefly but meer falsehood.

But as the opinions of men are so various, let us return to the standard of our profession, the inviolable word of God, and his unchangeable and eternal attributes; who is King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God; the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lords, (1 Tim. i. 17. vi. 15.) whose ‘mercy is from everlasting and to everlasting upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children’s children.’ (Ps. ciii. 17.) And though ‘the heavens vanish away like smoke, and the earth wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein die in like manner; yet his salvation shall be forever, and his righteousness shall not be abolished.’ (Isa. li. 6.) And forever blessed then are those which are made partakers thereof! Here is our confidence, here is our trust; for ‘in the Lord have we righteousness and strength: even unto him shall men come,’ (Isa. xlv. 24.) This
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is the happy privilege of all that believe; for his righteousness is unto all, and upon all them that believe. (see Rom. iii. 21—29.) 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' (Rom. x.) This is that glorious and infallible doctrine of imputed righteousness, of which I have given my reader a short sketch in my last discourse on redemption; I have there also given him a short specimen of our justification, &c. And, being sensible of man's incredulity, I have chosen scriptures of the affirmative sense and strongest authority. But as all, without the blessing of God, must prove ineffectual, to him therefore I commit this sincere attempt, hoping the contemplation of my reader will enlarge my theme, and never lay this treatise aside till all things here related are made reconcilable. Unto the ever-blessed Trinity do I consign these endeavours, and remain

Your faithful servant for Christ's sake.

J. W.

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ANSWER

Mr. James Walder, &c.

AS you have been pleased to bring in your accusations against the Methodists, I thought it highly requisite you should be answered, lest it should cause some to "err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." (Mark xii. 24.)

Methinks you would have done well to have known our principles, before you set forth such a public defamation against us. But however it is the spirit of christianity to love and forgive even our enemies, for we know who it is that kicketh against the pricks.

You seem in your preface to be suspectful that your work would be "condemned as unfavoury and unsound;" and indeed well might you expect it, since it is so obvious to be the character it most justly deserveth. But however I leave this to the consideration of the public; for I scorn to judge any man any farther than Christ alloweth—"By their fruits ye shall know them." Remember the old proverb, Audi utramque partem: but since you have appropriated the words of an apostle unto yourself, viz. "that you think it a small thing to be judged of man's judgment, &c." I think I may very justly answer you, we think it a small thing to be judged of your judgment, that we are "enthusiastical

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“dreamers, &c.” Moreover the ‘spiritual man judgeth all things, yet himself is judged of no man [aright]; for the things of God knoweth no man, but by the Spirit of God.’ Therefore, I presume, I may also appropriate the words of Christ to answer you, viz. ‘I came not to judge the world; but he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I intend to relate, the same shall judge him at the last day.’ (John xii. 47, 48.)

I intend, through the grace of God, to confirm every point of doctrine that I advance, by the infallible word of God. And ‘the Lord (says the prophet) is not man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent. Shall he speak, and shall he not do it? Nay but says Christ, though the firmament passeth away like a shadow, yet my word shall not pass away, but remain,’ either to the pronouncing of your damnation, or proclaiming your salvation; whichsoever state it finds you in, at the period of life, or hour of death.

But alas! I dare to say your discourse on the nature of moral actions and religious duties, &c. will be far more agreeable to the constitution of such as go about (as the apostle expresses it) establishing their own righteousness. (See Rom. ix. 31, 32. x. 3, 4.) But as for me, I dare not follow this path, lest it should lead me to destruction. I had much rather dwell on this blessed theme, the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ, for this is unto all and upon all them that believe.

But to proceed in my answer to your discourses, I shall first beg leave to speak of the two texts in your title-page; these I suppose were intended as precedent or alluding to the following: but I must tell you, as the vulgar proverb goes, that you have often the ill luck to strike yourself with your own gafflets.

Your first text is this: “If any man will do his will, he will know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” (John vii. 17.) Sir, I highly commend this proposition; for on these very terms I intend to examine your doctrine. Indeed I know no rule more sure and decisive than this you have premised; but we must be careful that we do not deceive ourselves

ourselves in this so important a determination. You know it would be impossible for any person perfectly to please you or do your will, (let his pretences be what it would) if so be he would perpetually persist in any one thing contrary to your will. So says Christ, 'If the eye only be evil, the whole body is full of darkness, and ye cannot serve God and mammon.' You must either resign up your whole heart unto God, or remain in an unrenewed state, and in enmity with him: and, on the other hand, you know, if a person that had done you the greatest injury was to come and intreat your favour and forgiveness, (if you knew as God knows when we are sincere) you would call this person then to do your will better than the other who had lived long, partly in obedience only, so far as was consistent with his own interest, &c. And certainly this is the case with God: he is ever willing to embrace a returning prodigal, and, while he is yet a great way off, to go and meet him with his spiritual assistance. Yea, whosoever confesseth their sins, God is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. And may God of his infinite mercy give my reader faith to lay hold on these blessed promises! God has not only promised to forgive us our sins, through the merits of our Redeemer, but also to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But, in order to give a more ample exposition to this text, it is proper to consider the meaning also of the context, and to whom it hath a more immediate reference.

First, We must understand this was spoken to them of the pharisaical class; but nevertheless this rule of determination remains an expedient remedy, a good preservative, and a sure decision (if sufficiently penetrated into) unto all christians; for the same advice that was properly adapted unto them for a means whereby they might know a man's doctrine, whether it be of God, &c. must be a requisite also unto us; and not only so, but there remains a word of great importance to such as are of the pharisaical disposition, which directly suits our present circumstance.

Our Lord tells us in the next verse after this text, 'he that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory,

&c.' Now whether you are not one of these very people, judge ye? for the main scope and bent of your discourse is robbing God of his glory, in endeavouring to confute the doctrine of free grace and unmerited redemption. You have formed a long story, and concluded every part with the imagination of your own heart: and if you claim not a superlative degree of holiness beyond the prophets of old, we shall soon know how to judge of your doctrine, for 'the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?' You dare not say I charge you falsely; for you have in general omitted the scriptures, and with your own dialectical arguments (if they are worthy so to be called) concluded your several points of doctrine, without any significative scriptures to confirm it; and indeed the reason was good, because you could find none of the same import or meaning. And I may justly conclude my discourse on this text as it is written in the context: "Moses gave you a law, and yet none of you keepeth the law. Therefore I need not accuse you, for there is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust." But to proceed to the next text you have quoted.

Methinks I somewhat wonder you should make use of these scriptures; unless it is because you here see a relation of your fellow-associates and companions in sentiments.—Be not angry, dear sir, and I will apply this part of scripture to you and yours, (Luke xii. 56, 57.) "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it, ye cannot discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" See the following verse—"You know when you go with your adversary to the judge or magistrate, as thou art in the way with him it is proper to give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him, lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison." (Note the next words:) "I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the very last mite." Woe be unto ye proud Pharisees; these scriptures will assuredly prove to your utter condemnation—for the meaning is this: Christ is your adversary, and

and the reason is evident, because you are daily undermining his righteousness; and are too proud to accept your salvation as a free gift, without money or price, as it is offered! See Isa. lv. You will not submit yourselves to the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ. (See Rom. i. 17. iii. 21.) Nay, ye are ready to say in your hearts, 'We will not have him to rule over us!' But give diligence; and since you take the law or commandments for your rule, see you keep it wholly and undefiled, in thought, word, and deed; or agree with Christ Jesus, that has taken upon him to fulfil the law in your stead; and then he will, from an adversary, become your friend. But see ye to this, ye proud Pharisees, that except ye yield up the work of redemption wholly unto Christ, he will not be thy Saviour, but thine adversary still. Nay, he will not have the work done by halves neither, for verily I say unto ye, there shall not one tittle pass from the law till all is fulfilled; therefore, if ye will not accept of my righteousness and obedience, saith Christ, do not act like the lawyers of old, but do what you profess. Remember, God will not be mocked, nor have his command slighted.

Now consider with thyself, reader, whether thou art sufficient for these things; (see Luke xiv. 26, &c.) and if you are not sufficient to stand an engagement with the King of heaven, you must in time agree with your adversary, and send an ambassage of peace. O be persuaded to lay hold on Christ your Redeemer, that he may not deliver you to the officer the devil, and under the curse of the law; nay I tell you frankly, saith Christ, if ye will not accept of me as your Saviour, viz. of my obedience as to the law, and my suffering as to the offence and transgression, ye shall bear your own burden; and this is all the pity ye shall have from me or my gospel. 'As many are of the works of the law, are under the curse—and if you will not believe the apostle, it was written of old, 'Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things that is written in the book of the law to do them.' 'Yea, and why of yourselves judge ye not what is right?' You must know that the debt of infinite justice must be paid; and if you find you cannot pay it yourself, you must accept of Christ as
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your surety, (Ps. cxix. 122.) and he will pay the debt; otherwise you are liable of being arrested every moment of your lives by the officer the devil, and to be cast into the prison of hell.

Be persuaded, dear reader, to consider these things, and apply it to your own souls; do not put it off to others; it belongs to you, whosoever ye are, and most nearly concerns your immortal souls. And remember this, if you do not agree with your adversary whilst you are in the way with him, when he has had you to the magistrate, it is too late to get free; for, if you are found a transgressor of the law, you will then be cast into prison: so certainly, if you do not agree with Christ your adversary in time, you will be cast into prison, there to lay to all eternity. But perhaps you will say, you never was an adversary to Christ; but the apostle was of the opinion, that every man by nature was such, 'for, says he, the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' (Rom. viii. 7, 8.) And our Saviour says as much, 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh;' and for this reason, 'except we are born again of the spirit, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' (See John iii.) 'Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?' I mean, that the justice of God must be satisfied, either by you or your surety; and that you must of necessity be endowed with the Holy Spirit, the author of all holiness, or never enter into the holy of holies, the kingdom of heaven. Yea, is not this reasonable? and why of yourselves judge ye not that this is right?

Now in order to answer your following discourses, I shall take particular account of every scripture which you think you have advanced against the "erroneous doctrine of the Methodists;" and as for the rest, I shall take but little notice, seeing it is of itself a sufficient confutation, and particularly because the scriptures are the only safe-guard of our christian welfare, and therefore needs to be kept secure from wrestlings.

As to your first discourse on the nature of moral actions, &c. I have but little to say of it, but only that your brains are infused with many fantastical notions of
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the Methodist principles, which you are entirely ignorant of. You have made one great and epidemical mistake throughout your discourses, in accusing us with that of which we are entirely innocent. But to speak most favourably of you, I compute it to your ignorance; but however I think you had no reason nor occasion to make it so public.

In order to have something to witness against us, you have first represented us as Stoics instead of Methodists, and under this colour you have answered the absurdity of their doctrine, and imputed their errors to the Methodists. Alas! the old proverb is truly verified in us—*Veritas odium pavit*: but we know who it is that kicketh against the pricks. Here is your honesty and uprightness, you boast of, displayed at once!

I suppose the chief aim and tendency of your first discourse is to pervert the doctrine of election, and to prove we are free agents. This has long been a matter of debate, and can never be cleared up to perfection on neither side; and the reason is evident, because it depends on the judgments of God, which, we are told, are unsearchable and past finding out; (see Rom. xi. 33.) and this is the apostle's conclusion of the matter. But I find you assume a superior knowledge to the apostle, and are so vain as to pretend you have laid the ax to the root! (that is I suppose) put the matter beyond all debate, and determined the case; or in other words, confuted the doctrine of election, and proved us absolutely free agents. Alas! how far will the pride of man exert itself, when it is not restrained by Almighty Grace? This could make Nebuchadnezzar thus boast of his greatness: 'Have I not built thee O Babylon, saith he? without considering the sole Author of all blessings, who made the very materials, and gave every ability consequent to the purpose. It is true indeed he built Babylon, and it proved to his own confusion.

I have observed (page 3.) you make this supposition: "You suppose two men in equal circumstances of life, and to have an equal share of judgment and penetration, and their situation equally advantageous, &c." and yet you intimate these two men shall not act alike. But methinks I should be glad to know the reason; there

there must of course be some difference, or they would be alike. Alas, you will prove the doctrine of election, whether I will or not: for if the case be thus prescribed, it must be the supernatural grace of God that makes the difference. Alas, where is your wisdom? surely you have not laid the ax to the root, as you imagine. You handle the doctrine of election the wrong end foremost; the best end for your purpose is to make your calling and election sure, and then you will no longer cavil about the matter. For my own part, through the grace of God, I can make a great use of this doctrine; yet nevertheless there are many wrest this (as they do also the other scriptures) unto their own destruction—*non omnes eadem mirantur amantque*. Remember for the future it is in vain to presume to find out that to perfection, which the word of God declareth is unsearchable, &c. In vain have you laid the ax to the root; for I find you are not able to strike one stroke in cutting up this doctrine: therefore I would advise you to lay this tool aside.

I have observed in several places, particularly in page 18, you expressly say, "If we enter into life, we must keep the commandments;" and by the next words I understand you mean the law of Moses, or Ten Commandments. Again, you make this conclusion of the whole matter, (page 22.) "to fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Now I answer you as Christ answered one in the gospel, 'Do this and live.' (Matt. xix. 16.) But remember the talking only will be to no purpose, any more than it was to him; and certainly if you was once put upon the trial (with the young man that pretended he had kept the law from his youth up) you would likewise go away sorrowful. Christ knew how to silence him without one word of reproof, only by putting him to trial; and certain it is, if he had loved his neighbour as himself, (as it is the whole and essential command of the second table) he would have sold his possessions, and given it to the poor; but alas! he went away sorrowful.

It is an easy matter to talk of these things; and as much more is it easy for a worldling to use this and the like

like scriptures as you have done; viz. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justice, to love mercy, and walk humbly with their God." But alas! who are they that do it at all times as they ought? I dare venture my soul upon it, whoever keepeth any one of these commands to perfection, he shall inherit eternal life. But then how vain is it to talk of these things, if we do not do it? All men will say they do it in some measure; but let me ask how they shall know when they have done enough to lay claim to the promised inheritance? alas, here men are silent. Surely it is surprizing men should be so fond of cozening their own souls! It is as though they thought the Almighty would be ruled by their tongues, and judge them according to their professions, instead of the secrets of the heart. O be persuaded to let these things be more duly weighed, if you would escape the torments of hell. Remember the omnipotent judge will not be mocked, nor put off with a bare external or outside profession: therefore let me apply the next text you have quoted to yourself, for certainly it most nearly concerns you— "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." It is generally allowed indeed that these Pharisees were notorious hypocrites; but certain it is, our moralized christians (as they are called) are not a step behind them, if their hearts were laid open as theirs was. It is reasonable to think that there were some sincere persons of this sect as well as others, for instance, Nicodemus and St. Paul we have manifest proof of; but we find they were both blind and ignorant, till the Lord opened their eyes and hearts, by his Spirit: and no marvel, for 'the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit,' (and for this very reason) 'because it is spiritually discerned.' (See 1 Cor. ii. 11—14.)

These Pharisees (we find by St. Paul in particular) were zealous according to the law, yet nevertheless were found under the curse and condemnation of it; and no wonder, for says the apostle, 'that none is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for the just (or them that are justified) shall live by faith.' (See Gal. iii. 11, 12. ii. 16.)

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But alas! though it be so evident, I find it is not known nor believed by our adversaries; for they allow us no other justification but keeping the commandments: for our present opposer doth openly confess, (page 22.) that he has made this the conclusion of the whole matter. Now what says the scripture? 'As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse.' (Gal. iii. 10.) Alas, who are they? why certainly such as seek to be justified by keeping the law; 'for it is written, Cursed is every one (says the apostle) that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. Oh but says the moralists, this is the ceremonial law. So then, if this be the case, you are gotten off safely; for you now have excluded the Ten Commandments: but let us examine more closely into this affair. What law is the apostle speaking of that was written and engraven on stones; that he calls 'the ministration of condemnation, &c.?' (2 Cor. iii. 9.) Again, what law is St. James speaking of, when he tells us, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, yet offend in one point is guilty of all?' Was it the ceremonial law that said, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, &c.?' Alas! these are griping scriptures to the proud Pharisees. Yea some are so impious to say, they believe St. James was a madman! and I believe others that are not so confidently bold, are of their opinion. O strange, amazing delusion! do such believe in God? O but says the worldling, It is very unlikely, and very unreasonable to think, he that offends in one point is guilty of all. Yes, I dare to say the children of Israel thought it very unlikely they should conquer the children of Edom, and take the land of Canaan, otherwise they would not have stoned Caleb and Joshua for encouraging them to trust in the Lord for it. What was the cause of all this? why their damnable evil hearts of unbelief. Yea it is the same evil prevails unto this day, and keeps people from seeing and believing that they are sinners, and consequently from any real and true repentance; and for this reason, says our Saviour, 'They shall all likewise perish.'

Now

Now hearken, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness, (Isa. xlvii. 12.) suppose a king was to put forth ten commands to any one of his subjects, and told him positively, if he transgressed or failed in the execution of any one, he would count him guilty of all, and he should suffer death for the transgression; yea and that he should be offended the same as though he had transgressed them all—would it not be an insolent and daring speech think ye, for the subject to reply, I will not believe you? Now this is apparently the case, God says, if you offend in one point of the law, ye are guilty of all; and without repentance and faith in Christ as your advocate, ye shall be everlastingly shut out of the kingdom of heaven. But, says the Pharisee, I will not believe it. Then let me ask him to remember this: 'He that believeth not, is condemned already.' (John iii. 18.) And 'he that believeth not you, (saith Christ to his apostles) believeth not me.' (Mark xvi. 16.) And again, 'He that believeth not, shall be damned.' Oh be persuaded to consider these things, for your soul's sake!

How dare ye walk the ground, ye cursed wretches, that make God a liar, who is the very fountain of all truth, and who also gave you the knowledge of truth? (1 John v. 10.) Shall not the omniscient Ruler of heaven and earth know when you have transgressed his law, and offended his divine Majesty? yes surely; for he (says the apostle, Heb. x. 28, 29.) that despised Moses's law, died without mercy; and how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the son of God? Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth? For when we were in the flesh (i. e. before we were born of the Holy Spirit) the motions of sin, which were (known to be sin by the law) by the law did work in our members (that is, in our mortal bodies) to bring forth fruit unto death. (Rom. vii. 1, 5.) I know that some would fain turn this to the ceremonial law, but let me ask them how the external ordinances could work in their members to bring forth fruit unto death? Certainly, if they are ruled by reason, (which

they so much boast of) they must give up the point. Again, says the apostle, 'by the law is the knowledge of sin. Now it is certain we must first know the internal significancy and condemnation of the law, before we can possibly repent; for how shall the Pharisee repent, till he sees and will acknowledge himself guilty? Nay, till then it will be continually, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, &c.' 'Yea, says the apostle, the law is our school-master to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.' (See Gal. iii. 24. v. 4, 5, 6.) A very apt similitude indeed! for as a school-master is obliged to scourge and correct his children, so doth the law, or commandments, scourge and correct our consciences, and at last bring us to humility and repentance; and thus are we brought to Christ. But alas! the apostles and our opponents are of very differing opinions; for they say, "if we enter into life, we must keep the commandments." (page 18.) St. Paul says, 'I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Now which shall we believe, the apostle or these seducers? Again, the apostle tells us, 'Israel hath not attained the law of righteousness, (and for this very reason) because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.' (Rom. ix. 31, 32. see x. 4, 8, 9.) Now let me ask if our opposers are not directly in their case? for they tell us, "If we enter into life, we must keep the commandments!" The apostle says, he does 'not frustrate the grace of God (in this manner); for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.' (Gal. ii. 21.) Surely then, if righteousness doth not come this way, it is in vain to expect it.

Now Pharisees, how will ye term this to the ceremonial law? for if righteousness come not by the law, viz. both moral and ceremonial, how shall it come by part? besides the apostle makes no such distinction. And again, the apostle tells us, 'the law entered (for this purpose) that the offence might abound.' (Rom. v. 20.) And for this reason, the law must become our school-master, if ever we are brought to Christ to be justified by faith. (Gal. iii. 24.)

Again, we are told 'the scripture hath concluded all under

under sin, (Pharisees and all) that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.'

After man's fall the pure law of God entered to apprise him of it. O my friends, if ever you enter into life (I do not tell you, you must keep the commandments according to the literal sense, 'for the letter killeth, &c.' 2 Cor. iii. 6. but) you must first be convinced of your deficiencies herein, and come with an humble and contrite heart unto Christ Jesus; then he will shew you the glorious light of the gospel; then he will bring these glad tidings to your hearts: Friend, saith he, I have fulfilled the law in your stead, and am become your advocate and surety; I have paid the debt of infinite justice and let you free, and will give you everlasting life; and none shall be able to pluck you out of mine hand. (See John x. 28.)

You know a wise physician will not order all one medicine for every cure: Neither will Christ our physician speak to all alike. But to the natural man he points out the law, or commandments, that it may become his school-master; and when the conscience is wounded, 'Blessed, saith he, are the poor in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.' It is Christ that killeth, and it is Christ that maketh alive. 'Come unto me, saith he, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest unto your souls.' Forever blessed and happy are those that have proved these things by experience. It is for want of this, dear sir, you thus awkwardly handle these points of doctrine.

But though you are an adversary and opposer to the truth, yet I pray the Lord to give you a true understanding, and shew you as he did St. Paul, that it is hard to kick against the pricks. Certainly you would do well to consider duly before you bring in your vindictive accusations against us, lest haply you are found to fight against God.

But to conclude this chapter in the words of the apostle, (Rom. ix. 31, 32. x. 2.) 'My prayer to God for Israel (and all that are thus seeking righteousness by the law) is, that they may be saved; for I bear them record, they have a zeal towards God, but not according to knowledge.' (See Rom. iii. 20—31.)

DISCOURSE II.

On the nature of Conversion, Regeneration,
or the New Birth, &c.

IN order to answer your discourse on this subject, I shall first (through the grace of God) make some remarks upon it, and after that discover my own sentiments on the same point of doctrine.

First, I have observed (page 24.) you say, "When the heart is changed, the whole bent and disposition of the mind changes from that which is evil, to that which is good." Then you intimate, "They are such persons as the word of God calls, New Creatures, Born again, Raised to newness of life, &c." Very good all this in its proper place. But I have observed you count all such as live a moral and civil life to be good christians! Now it is evident there are many such Pharisees from their childhood; therefore let me ask you, when these are to be born again, and become new creatures? yea, what need is there of it, if they were in the right way already? How shall all things become new with them, (as you observe page 25.) if they are in a good state by nature? nay, if all things become new to them, then consequently they must change from good to evil. But perhaps you will say, there is no need for a moral person to be born again, &c. but alas! you never find any exception in the scripture, and our Saviour positively declareth, 'If ye are not born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God.' (John iii.) And St. Paul tells you as positively, 'If any man hath not the Spirit of God, he is none of his.' (Rom. viii. 9.) Nay, you find Nicodemus and St. Paul in particular had need

of this new birth; though they were both zealous according to the law of Moses, and lived as moral and religious a life as any can pretend to: yea, I have observed (page 39.) you call St. Paul a good man before his conversion; yes I answer, he was much like yourself; he had a zeal towards God, but not according to knowledge; he sat in Moses' seat, and was zealous according to the law; but alas! he was a poor blind Pharisee at last. But I observe you make mention of St. Paul's blindness in persecuting the christians, for a proof against such as speak of assurance in salvation, or being sensible they are called of God, &c. for you say, "St. Paul himself believed he did well, and that he had a call to it when he persecuted the christians;" and therefore you say, "Good men are liable to mistakes;" yea, I answer, too many, but not of this nature. But alas, dear sir, did you ever read of Paul in the scriptures? one would be apt to think you was brought up in some Pagan country, where the scriptures are not revealed; or what think ye St. Paul meant when he wrote thus to Timothy, (i. e.) "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom, saith he, I am the chief?" And in many other places he counts himself still the least of all saints, because he persecuted the church of God. But if we consider the case thoroughly, we need not wonder that our adversaries should be so desirous to justify St. Paul before he was converted, because the reason is evident, they are unconverted themselves, they are in the same state of unbelief, they have the same persecuting spirit that St. Paul had before his conversion; therefore it is, their spirits so intimately concur together: besides if they can justify St. Paul in this state, they are justified themselves.

I have observed in many places you seem greatly offended that we should ascribe all glory and power to God, in the work of conversion, &c. Indeed I am no stranger to the pride of human nature, but am truly sensible it will (whilst unrenewed by the grace of God) endeavour to rob him of his glory, in attributing some praise, some honour, and some glory to it's self; though they can frequently

quently acknowledge, that all praise, all power, and all glory, belongeth to their Maker and Redeemer. Alas! how inconstant, unstable, and inconsistent, is the natural man in all his ways! He can easily say the Lord's Prayer, that his is the kingdom, his is the power, and the glory, and make many other acknowledgments of the like nature; but alas! at the same time (in his heart) is still ascribing some praise, power and glory to himself; and no marvel then that they cannot believe: for 'how can ye believe, saith Christ, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?' (John v. 44.) Nay, ye are here as much as told, that it is an impossibility. O that men would be but as good as their words, and ascribe all glory, praise, might, majesty, and dominion to the God of their salvation! Let us learn of the apostle if we glory, to glory in the Lord: (see Jer. ix. 23, 24, 2 Cor. 10. 17.) for what art thou, O vain man, and who hath made thee to differ from another? If thou hast received any kind of perfection beyond thy brother, why dost thou glory, as though thou hadst not received it? Ascribe therefore all praise to him who conferreth thy blessings upon thee; for certainly, according to your confession, it is all due unto the Lord. Do not any longer assume that to yourself, which belongeth to God, i. e. all praise, glory, and power. It is not the character of a christian to rob God of his glory. Remember it was foretold, by the prophets, that, at the coming of Christ, the valies should be exalted, and mountains and hills should be brought low.' (Isa. xl. 4.) And thus you find our Saviour and his apostles confirm it, for he that humbleth himself in the sight of men, shall in the same degree, or greater, be exalted before men and angels. This is the language of the gospel of Christ; for he that 'humbleth himself as a little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' (See Matt. xviii. 4. Luke xiv. 11.) And we find it was the character of the multitudes that believed; for they 'were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them, (as our opponents do, that it is by our own attainments we gain title to happiness) neither said any of them that ought of the things he possessed

fed were his own: but they had all things (plain, mean, low, and) common. (Acts iv. 32.)

Here is at once painted forth to our view the inviolable character of all christians throughout all generations! View this description, dear sir, and see if you are cloathed with that garment of humility, when you call us "Enthusiastic Dreamers, &c." (page 28.) for no other reasons, but because we ascribe all glory to God and his grace. I observe you here call it "irresistible grace." I am not ashamed to own the name, for the Lord himself hath declared, that 'he will put his fear in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him.' (See Jer. xxxii. 39, 40.) And certainly the Lord hath the same method still in making christians that he formerly made use of. Very pertinently then may it be called, Irresistible Grace. Moreover, I see not how it is possible man should be so great an enemy to his own soul as to dare resist it: how is it possible man can have heart to resist that which he knows by resistance would make him forever miserable? Nay, it is the fear of the Lord that keeps him from it. And indeed the fear of present calamities is sufficient to alarm the believer, when he knows the terrors of the Lord in his conscience. Therefore all your If's and And's, (page 32, 33.) with your dialectical arguments, are to no purpose; and you may almost as well make this supposition: Suppose a person, after he was got safe to heaven, should leap into hell; how should he be sure to return again? For certain it is, whoever has that faith which worketh by love, it will engage him to work the works of God.

But as it is in vain to answer the many foolish objections men will make, (whilst in a carnal state) I think it most profitable to my reader, to give him my sentiments on the subject of regeneration.

First, you must understand this doctrine beareth divers names and denominations in scripture, yet in effect is one and the same thing; for instance, it is called, the new birth, Christ's baptism, conversion, becoming new creatures, being born again, having the Spirit of Christ, &c. (Rom. viii. 9.) All which signifieth the change that must be wrought by the power of God the Holy Ghost, and experienced by every soul before it can be
C admitted

admitted into the kingdom of heaven. We find the scriptures are very peremptory and positive on this point and therefore we need not be long in determining the need and necessity of this regenerating change. It was the first point of doctrine our Lord offered to Nicodemus the ruler; and his words are very absolute and decisive: for 'Verily, verily, (saith Christ) I say unto ye, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' (John iii. 3.) This then was enough to put any one to search, who had the least hope or desire of getting thither, since the son of God, the only author of our salvation, in so deliberate a manner determines the case, and puts the matter beyond all controversy. He could not have said any greater thing to engage our attention, than that we should be finally excluded the kingdom of heaven without this experience; for if so, all other endeavours must of necessity prove ineffectual. But, says carnal reason, 'How can a man be born when he is old?' 'How can these things be?' Why says Christ, 'I tell you plainly, it must be; for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.' So that all men, as they are born first of the flesh after the will of man, are daily seeking to please man before God; they are naturally prone to satisfy their own sensual lusts and appetites, contrary to the will of God: therefore they must be born or baptized with the Holy Spirit, or they will be utterly void of all true holiness, and therefore must remain incompatible and averse to the supreme Being; and for this reason be excluded the kingdom of heaven. Yea, says the apostle, 'the carnal mind is enmity against God, because it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.' (Rom. viii. 7.) Therefore he makes this conclusion: 'So then (saith he) they which are in the flesh cannot please God;' 'but (continues he) ye are not carnal, but spiritual, if so be the spirit of Christ dwell in you.' But on the other hand, now 'if any man (saith he, be who he will) have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.'

Seeing then both Christ and his apostles are so positive in this, let us examine the matter more closely; for here you find is no room to get clear.

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For again Christ confirms it in this manner, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man (i. e. every man) be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' But hence arises many objections; why, says some, what then are to become of those that are never baptized, because it is said we must be born of water, &c.? Why you must understand this water meaneth St. John's Baptism, because he baptized with water, &c. But then, if we would have a true understanding of this, we must not look to meer words; for this is a metaphorical expression, and signifieth the nature of the case.

Now then let us consider the main scope and intention of St. John's baptism; for certainly this must be the way to determine the matter. We find St. John himself speaks lightly of this—'I indeed, saith he, baptize you with water unto repentance; (mark this word repentance) but he that cometh after me, (that is, Christ) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' (Matt. iii. 11.) Now here is another metaphor made use of, i. e. fire: so that we may almost as well say, we are obligated in some outward manner to pass through the fire as the water, was it not at first made use of as a token and representation by the apostles.

And again, we find St. Peter speaks lightly of this water-baptism; for, saith he, 'can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' (Acts x. 47.) So that from the whole we may, I think, justly conclude this to be our Saviour's meaning: Except a man repent (which was the main design of John's baptism) and be baptized with my baptism, i. e. the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

If we would have a true understanding of divine truths, we must not look to meer words, but the scope and design, import and intention. St. John was sent to prepare the way before our blessed Lord, according to the prophet's prediction; and to baptize the people with water, for a token of Christ's coming, and a representation of their being cleansed (by Christ's baptism) from their sins, even as water cleanses the body. And above all remember this: Repentance and faith was required

of persons to be baptized; yea, and they were highly reproved of St. John for coming to be baptized of him, when their evil deeds was a proof of their lewdness and insincerity; for it was manifest that it was not their desire to repent.

Knowing therefore that mankind are so apt to take the shadow for the substance, and the meer outward form and representation for real religion, I thought proper briefly to hint on the nature of water-baptism, as a means to prevent disputes. And I conclude (with respect to water-baptism) as the apostle does in other light matters, 'Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind;' but by no means let us rest in any outward form or ceremony: remembering the words of St. John, (if you do not design to repent) 'Who hath warned you from the wrath to come?' It is true indeed, Christ came to call sinners; but it was first to repentance, and then to the kingdom of God. But to return to my subject.

'Marvel not, saith Christ, that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.' (John iii. 7.) Here again observe is another confirmatory repetition: Marvel not, saith he, that I said unto thee, that ye must be born again; for I again declare, it must be so. Therefore he goes on to give a description of this new birth, taking a similitude from the wind: 'The wind bloweth, saith he, where it listeth, (or liketh, i. e. in regard to man) and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' (ver. 8.) It is true indeed we know it proceeds from God, but we can neither see it nor know from what part or quarter it cometh. So it is with the wind. We can feel the efficacy and power of it blowing the mortal body: so in like manner we feel the effect of the Holy Spirit blowing the immortal soul to a holy and heavenly frame of meekness, humility and love. But says the natural man, (with Nicodemus) 'how can these things be?' Oh, says Christ, 'art thou a master of Israel (as we may say in like manner to our learned doctors) and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, saith Christ, we speak that we do know, (yea and so does every christian) and testify that we have seen;

seen; and ye receive not our witness.' Nay, so it is to this day; if we tell the world of any one's conversion, it is called enthusiasm and madness; they will not receive our witness. But says Christ, 'If I have told you earthly things (or things that are received and experienced on earth) and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?' yea how indeed! If men will not believe such things as their own fellow-creatures experience, and such things as are promised so plainly in scripture, and so obviously displayed in the change it produceth amongst mankind; if they will not believe, I say, such things as are so evident to be seen as is the conversion of sinners, how should they believe, if they were told of the wonderful things in heaven?

Having briefly explained our Saviour's conference with Nicodemus, and shewn you the absolute necessity of the new birth, and the impossibility of attaining heaven without it, I now proceed to exemplify and confirm it by scripture.

First, we find this was promised by St. John, that Christ should baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire. (See Matt. iii. 11.) Now Christ, you find, to fulfil all righteousness, and to set forth a pattern and example to his people, was baptized first of St. John; (see John i.) and that it might be more manifest to the people what should follow baptism, (if rightly initiated and received) he received the Holy Spirit in a bodily shape like a dove. Now as a dove is known to be a meek, tender, and loving creature, this was a fit emblem of God's love to his children, especially when they are made worthy partakers of St. John's baptism, that is, repentance. For how was it with the returning prodigal? while he was yet a great way off, his father ran and kissed him. Now it is observeable, Jesus being left some time to be tempted in the wilderness, (as is generally the case with young converts) he immediately after began to preach the gospel, giving an example in this also to all ministers, and showing them, that when they are baptized of the Spirit, then and not before, they are capable of preaching the gospel.

Now

Now after Jesus had preached some time, he promises to send the Holy Spirit unto his disciples, John xvi. 7. He tells them what effects the Holy Spirit should produce; 'he should convince the world of sin, &c.' Accordingly we find the promise fulfilled at the day of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, (see Acts ii.) as the apostles were sitting together, (probably conversing about their crucified Saviour) suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind. Here you find the similitude of the wind, before spoken of, was exemplified in an external manner to the apostles; and the fire also, that we are told by St. John that Christ should baptize us with. (See ver. 13.) And you must understand that all these things are fulfilled unto this day by an internal efficacy and power on the souls of the regenerate.

Fire, in scripture, sometimes signifieth affliction, sometimes zeal and fervency of Spirit, &c. Thus we find the prophet Jeremiah expresses his zeal: 'His word was in mine heart, saith he, as a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.' (Jer. xx. 9.) Thus is it with the regenerate. And thus David expresses himself, 'My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned.' (Ps. xxxix. 3.) And in many other respects we are said to be tried as gold is tried in the fire, &c. all which are the effects of regeneration.

We find, at the day of Pentecost, 'there were Jews, devout men out of every nation;' (Acts ii. 5.) so that the sound of the gospel was at this time spread abroad throughout the world. And we find some were amazed at the wonderful works of God; others mocked and said, 'These men are full of wine, &c.' (ver. 13.) Thus many make their scoff at this day; and others cry out, as they did then in former days, that the people are mad, &c. But with this Peter began to preach Christ crucified; at which the people were pricked at the heart, and began to enquire, 'What they should do to be saved?' (ver. 37.) Now note what Peter said unto them; 'Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for (a token of) the remission
sion

sion of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost' (ver. 39.) And in the next words the apostle confirms the promise in the most indefeasible, positive and extensive manner. 'For the promise, says he, is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.' Observe here is no restriction nor exception of such as are called of God, neither in its extent, perpetuity, or duration; but to all alike was the promise given, to 'every kindred, tongue and nation;' (Rev. v. 9.) to them that are present, to them that are to come, to them that are near, and to them that are afar off, 'even as many as the Lord our God shall call.' But many will make this objection and say, they hear of but few that are called or baptized in this manner; it is to be hoped, say they, there are some christians that are not baptized with the Holy Ghost, &c. But alas! this was always the way the world went on. I dare affirm this was their plea, when of hundreds Elijah was left alone, a prophet of the Lord! they could encourage themselves in sin, because there were so many to keep them company; and indeed because there was so many alike, say they, God is merciful, and therefore it is unlikely he should punish such a number! besides, think they, I am as well as my neighbour, and perhaps God will spare us all!

I believe this is the best plea the devil ever made with man; and by this delusion he hath most increased his kingdom. Yea by this means he leads them captive at his will, makes them his servants, and fights against God with full vigour and resolution. But alas! what will they do in the end thereof? We find the people could not believe, before Noah's flood, that the Lord would sweep away a whole world of people (except Noah and his family) by a deluge of water: no, no, they could then call God a merciful God all the time he let them alone in their sins, and under the tyranny of the devil. But though they were so confident, you see they were all destroyed. The children of Israel could thus encourage one another in sin, as they was journeying to the land of Canaan; but alas! the justice of God cut them off in their sins, and suffered but two men (i e. of them that first set out) of so many thousands

sands (namely Caleb and Joshua) to enter into the promised land. Thus the Jews could cry peace to themselves, though they were told by the prophets, of being carried away to Babylon. Again, at the coming of Christ, they would not believe that misery and destruction should befall them; no, their hearts were raised with the greatest enmity against Christ and his apostles, for bringing that news unto them, that they must repent or perish.

Thus the devil, from time to time, has blinded the eyes of the people, and cried peace, peace, when there was no peace, till he had led them on to utter destruction; and what is above all amazing, is to think after all these dreadful examples man should still be so willing to adhere to the devil's suggestions! Can you think, O vain world, that the Almighty hath forgot to punish the wicked? We are told by God himself, that 'Satan is the father of liars; when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own, and that he has ever proved a liar from the beginning;' and certainly this is sufficient caution to them that believe. But alas! the case is this: the people will believe the devil before they will believe God: and though they have all these things written to shew them their danger; and how many thousands have been already led captive at Satan's will, till destruction fell upon them; yet nevertheless to this day (notwithstanding all the scriptures, and the ministers of the gospel) people will be encouraging each other in the road to hell; as though it would be an easement to them to see their friends and companions in the same place of torment! O be persuaded to consider; and if you will not believe the word of God, that the devil is such a deceiving tyrant, yet surely you may remember how many thousands and thousands he has already deceived and caused to be destroyed. Oh my friends, it would be but little easement to any one man that puts his hand in the fire and burns it, if a thousand was to do the same thing. Nay, certainly it will be an aggravation to the torments of hell, to hear so many thousands of friends and relations scream and cry, and lay each other to blame for leading them to that place of torment. O but says the devil, there is no such thing.

God

God is merciful, &c. But remember, my friends, his mercy, truth, and justice, must of necessity go unanimously all together; but this is what Satan would not have you consider. He is willing enough to call God merciful, if he can but make you believe he is a liar, and that his threatnings will not be executed: but remember as aforesaid, his mercy, truth and justice, must go together; for they are inseparably united, and cannot be separated. God is merciful indeed, but will not deny his word to save the whole world from destruction; for if so, he would cease to be God. And this is all the hopes a man can have of heaven, that walketh not the road which God hath appointed. Alas! then this is but a dull prospect of future bliss! 'Heaven and earth, saith Christ, shall pass away, (that is, the firmament, or heaven of fixed stars) but my word shall not pass away;' no, but will remain terrifying the conscience, (of him that now rejects it) unto all eternity. 'The word that I have spoken, says Christ, the same shall judge ye at the last day.' (John xii. 48.) 'I am the door, the way, and life; whoever entreth not in by the door, shall be accounted thieves and robbers.' (See John x.)

I hope I have by this time answered this objection, and shewn you the folly of such vain excuses and pleas against the word of God, as to think only you have the world of your side. Oh, says the Pharisee, you are very uncharitable; you condemn all people, except they are of your opinion. I say nay, but all that be not of the opinion of Christ and his apostles. St. John tells us, that 'we know the whole world lieth in wickedness; (1 John v. 19.) that is, in their natural state before they repent, &c. Was he not counted an uncharitable man, think ye? Yes says Christ, 'If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. If we were to cry, Peace, peace, (like the false prophets of old) when there is no peace, we should likewise be esteemed of the world: but alas! if we tell them as St. Peter did, that 'they must repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out;' (Acts iii. 19.) this is not at all agreeable to their constitutions. They would willingly (like Balaam) die the

death of the righteous, but are unwilling to be converted that they may live the life. O be persuaded to consider before it be too late! God hath declared, 'there is no peace for the wicked.' (Isa. xlviii. 22.) Therefore turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die? (See Joel ii. 12.) Open your hearts therefore unto God, and earnestly intreat him for his Holy Spirit "to amend your lives according to his holy word." See how graciously and undeniably this is promised to them that ask it—"I say unto ye, says Christ, Ask, and (ye shall have) it shall be given you." (Luke xi.) He doth not say it may, but positively it shall: therefore it can be nothing but your evil heart of unbelief that keeps you from it. 'Seek, saith he, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto ye: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.' (ver. 9, 10.) There is nothing wanting then but faith and sincerity in importuning for it, according to the foregoing parable: yea, in the following verses, Christ puts the matter beyond all dispute, and even seems surprised that men should doubt of receiving that from a gracious God, which is both to his glory and our good. 'If ye, being evil, saith he, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' (ver. 13.) O, what a blessed promise is here! even the Lord himself declaring, it is as much more likely our heavenly Father should give us this blessing, (that sincerely ask him) as he does, in a comparative degree, exceed our earthly parents in greatness, power, and goodness. Lord, give us hearts that are unfeignedly thankful for this and all thy blessed promises!

Now, dear reader, if my own experience can have any influence on you to engage you to ask for this blessing, I tell you this very promise (ver. 13.) is what I myself long relied upon, daily asking and continually importuning, till at length the Lord was pleased to answer my prayers, and fully convinced me that I was baptized with this baptism, that I was born again of this Holy Spirit, that I was made his adopted son, and heir of heaven. From that time I have taken the promises of the gospel to myself, and know they belong to me:

from

from that time I have read the gospel as an heir reads a will, wherein he is sure of a large legacy bequeathed him; whilst others I find are content, like lawyers, with a meer outside memory of it; and as though it did no farther concern them.

But remember, reader, the Lord's will is that none should perish, but that all men should come to repentance that is unto salvation, not to be repented of. (See 2 Pet. iii. 9.) 'Let him that will, come and take of the water of life freely, without money or price.' (Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17.) Remember it is a free gift: it is 'by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: (and this is the reason) it is not of works, lest any man should boast.' (Eph. ii. 8, 9.) Yea says the apostle, it is 'not by works of righteousness that we have done, but by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' (Tit. iii. 5.) Certainly then, if the apostles were not saved by the works of righteousness which they had done, it is absolutely in vain for us to expect to be saved for the works of righteousness which we can do; nay, but if we are saved, it must be (like the apostles) by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Yea, says Christ, 'Except ye are born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God. Alas, then since Christ and his apostles both declare we cannot be saved without the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is Christ's baptism, (see Matt. iii. 11.) and since you have such promises given, on the other hand, to you that ask, (see Luke xi.) surely this must be enough to excite you earnestly to entreat the Lord for this blessing; God himself hath declared, you shall not be saved, you shall not see the kingdom of heaven without it. (See John iii. Rom. viii. 9.) And, on the other hand, he hath promised, by the means of regeneration, (Tit. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 8.) ye shall be saved, and re-united into his favour. For as many as have received the Spirit, are become the sons of God; 'and if children, says the apostle, then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, &c.' (Rom. viii. 14—18.) and remember this promise was given to them that were afar off; that is, to all succeeding ages. And well it is on our sides; for we find the only one

that is able to gain admittance for us, through his meritorious cross and passion; the only one that can conduct us safely to our desired haven. He himself declareth, we cannot enter into life unless we are baptized with this baptism, born again of his Spirit, or cleansed by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Nay, it is reasonable to think that we must be baptized with Christ's baptism, before we can be made christians in deed and in truth. But I hope it is already realized and confirmed sufficiently to such as believe the word of God. But alas! it is the craft of Satan, to make many believe the new birth, or inspiration of the Spirit, &c. is ceased. I know this is the grand delusion of Satan, and the best craft he can possibly invent to destroy the souls of men; for by this means he puts them in doubt of the scriptures, overthrows the very attributes of God; and makes man believe he is failed in his promise, and that he is altered in his word and conduct. But alas! what can men mean then in praying for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, &c. in the communion-service? Again, in the litany we pray thus, that the Lord may endue us with the Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to his holy word; again, that he may not take his Holy Spirit from us, &c. Men will join in these and many other prayers of the like nature, and say Amen to it all; but alas! if you talk of these things out of the building called the church, it is called enthusiasm and madness; they will for these acknowledgements soon brand you with the name of Methodists, false Prophets, Antichrists, &c. though themselves are the very people: yea, by their fruits ye may know them. For when they pray they are mocking of God, and pray for that which they themselves say is not attainable, namely, the inspiration of the Spirit, &c. Yea even in the Lord's Prayer, they pray for the same thing; for when ye pray for the kingdom to come, &c. what kingdom think ye it is? The kingdom of Christ at the end of the world, say some. Alas! they have much more need to pray that it never come. But we know however that this is already fixed and determined of God, and our prayers can make it neither sooner nor later; therefore it is in vain to set about

about it. But certainly this is the kingdom here meant, which Christ tells us, 'cometh not with observation, &c. for so, saith he, it is within you;' (Luke xviii. 20, 21.) that is, the kingdom of grace or Holy Spirit; which, by its comfortable motions, is a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven; or, in the apostle's words, an earnest of our inheritance. But yet says some, I believe there is no such thing now-a-days: but alas! they can make this conclusion to their psalms and prayers, and make nothing of it, that as it was in the beginning, is now, &c. They can read that 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever,' (Heb. xiii. 8.) and pretend to believe the scriptures, and at the same time deny it. Alas! how blind is a man by nature? He will pretend to pray and confess before God such things as he will positively deny before men; yea he can also call himself a poor miserable sinner at church, but when he gets out, if you call him a sinner he will immediately begin to justify himself like the proud Pharisee, and compare himself with his neighbours, &c.

But let us again consider this objection the world generally introduces.

If so be there is no such thing in our days, as to be born again of the Holy Spirit, Christ uses us very ill; for he, and his apostles likewise, in the most peremptory and positive manner declares, we shall not see nor enter into the kingdom of God. Alas then we are come forth into the world in a dreadful time, if there is none can enter into the kingdom of God. O strange, strange, amazing delusion! Be astonished, O ye heavens, to see the presumption of man, even daring to overthrow the very attributes of the unchangeable God! But let me ask you, ye vain deluded wretches, when the dispensation of the gospel was altered? when was it Christ's word and promise was broken, or his mind so much altered, that he should now accept such into his kingdom as are not baptized with his baptism, or born again of the Holy Spirit? when was it the kingdom of heaven first admitted any unholy thing to enter there? Well, says some, (when they find they are confuted) I do not understand it. Therefore away they turn themselves, as though this was a matter that did not concern them.

And

And say they, If we know much, there will be much required: so they content themselves, with the unprofitable servant, to rest in sin and ignorance here, and be cast into outer darkness hereafter. (See Matt. xxv. 30.) But alas! they will not hear nor believe; and we may fitly say by them as the prophets said by them of old, 'their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, &c.' (Acts xxviii. 27.) We find these scoffers are already come, that should say all things continue as in the beginning, &c. and therefore they eat, drink, and be drunken; for say they, to-morrow we die. And certainly the very words the Almighty uttered forth in the land of Judah, are very applicable to our nations—'A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so; but what will they do in the end thereof? (Jer. v. 30.) People are very willing to hire some smooth-tongued minister, that they may trust their souls with from one sabbath to another; and all the week they can go on in their sins; besides the minister will take care he does not terrify their consciences, nor deter them from sin; they are such as heal the wound slightly, crying peace, peace, when there is no peace. (Jer. vi. 14.) and, as a worthy author observes, they are fitly likened to unskilful quacks, which will heal the wound at top, but never probe it to the bottom to make a perfect cure; therefore it generally breaks forth more deadly and infectious than before. Indeed this a proper and significant allusion; for as the unskilful quack heals the wound of the body slightly, so does the unskilful preacher the wounded soul. They are like unto a person that only gathers off some few branches from an evil or corrupt tree in order to destroy it, but yet lets the main body of the tree remain standing, so that it is still liable to bear again; when the only way is to lay the ax at the root—they can preach up this, that, and the other good work as previous to man's justification—they put their own righteousness (which the Lord hath declared shall not profit them, and which the prophets count as filthy rags, Isa. lvii. 12. lxiv. 6.) in the room of a Saviour!—they do not press them throughly to true repentance,

penitance, but some little amendment of life—so they patch the old garment with new, and make the rent worse than it was before. If they would, like a skilful physician, heal the wound at bottom, they would first shew them the deceitfulness of their hearts, and that it is desperately wicked above all things—they would exhort them to cast out every evil, before they pretended to be invested with any good; knowing that ‘if the eye be only evil, the whole body is full of darkness,’ and that ‘ye cannot serve God and mammon, &c.’ (Matt. vi. 23, 24.) In a word, then let us consider, who are these false prophets? Why, if we are determined by scripture, it must be such ministers as cry, peace, peace, when there is no peace, &c. (Jer. viii. 11.)—it is such as pray for the inspiration of the Spirit, &c. and directly after preach against it; for certainly these cannot be the true prophets of the Lord, because they say and forsay. Again, it is such as pretend to hold with the articles and homilies of the church, when they preach against original sin, free grace, justification by faith, the inspiration of the Spirit, &c. which are the chief articles of our christian faith. Yea, they have the impudence to call us modern teachers, though we teach the old doctrine and they the new. Alas! their imputation cannot be just, unless the christian religion has, like old cloaths, been out of fashion, and now it is new-modelled and recruited again. It is called a new doctrine; I believe this to be the case; for otherwise, the articles and homilies of the church, and antient authors, cannot possibly teach new doctrine; and that the Methodists (as they are pleased to call us) hold with, is a truth they cannot deny.

Surely then any reasonable man of an unprejudiced disposition, must discern who are those mockers St. Jude speaks of, ‘who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they, (saith he, pointing out to them) who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.’ (Jude 18.) And do they not plainly prove this upon themselves? for they even deny there is any such thing. (Note the next words) ‘But ye beloved, saith he, build up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in (or by) the Holy Ghost. In the Holy Ghost—alas! was not these

these Methodists, think ye? Surely, my friends, if we are determined by the scriptures, we shall find those very people that deny the necessity of the new birth, &c. are the false prophets, antichrists, modern teachers, &c. which they have the impudence to impute unto us; and it wants nothing but a turn-over you find.

Again, if we take St. Paul's rules in examining 'them which have the rule over us, (that is, the ministers) who have spoken unto us the word of God; whose faith follow, (that is, examine into) considering the end of their conversation.' (Heb. xiii. 7, 8.) We must see that they always preach 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.' This was the rule the apostle gave us; and by this we was to determine the case, and clearly to know whether they were the ministers of truth, or not; to the end that we might not be 'carried away by strange doctrines.' (ver. 9.) Alas! then for such as deny this grand point of doctrine, and would fain confine it to the primitive ages; surely these do not preach 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.' Nay, it is too fitly applied to them what St. Jude asserts, they are sensual, having not the Spirit themselves, therefore they cannot (as another apostle observes) know the things of God.

Now a word to the antichrists; which appellation they also impute unto us.

Now again, if we are ruled by the apostles, we may soon discern who these are likewise. Antichrist signifieth an adversary or opposer to Christ: and what can be more so than such as preach up good works, and put them in the place of a Saviour, viz. that we are to be saved by them! Directly opposite are the apostles to this: for 'after the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, (says the apostle) it was not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour,' (Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6. Eph. ii. 8.) But to have more immediate recourse to the word antichrist in scripture, we find by St. John, 'Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God.'

God. And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.' (1 John iv. 3, 4. 2 John 7.) But I remember I once put forth this scripture to a person; and he replied, Who is there that doth not believe that Christ is come in the flesh? I suppose he meant his coming into the world in the nature of man. This he thought a safe turn; but the next words immediately stop his mouth, (as it will all our adversaries); 'for, says the apostle, ye are of God little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.' So that you find you cannot get short of this confession, that Christ dwelleth in your flesh by his Spirit; and if so, greater is he that is in you, than the spirit of antichrist that is in the general part of the world. We need not 'marvel then, says the apostle, if the world hate us;' but 'we know that God abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us.' (1 John iii. 13, 24.) And 'hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' (ch. iv. 13.)

This you find is the only evidence the apostles had of their being in favour with God. And the apostle Paul makes this as a rule and demonstration to the Corinthians; and by this they were to examine their faith. 'Know ye not, saith he, how that Jesus Christ dwelleth in you, except ye are reprobates?' (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) (that is, concerning the faith of Christ). And certainly this is the only way for people to examine themselves to this day, for 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.'

We read, when St. Paul was about to depart from a certain place, he exhorted the ministers to 'take heed to themselves and their flock, over which, saith he, the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, &c.' (see Heb. xiii. 8. Acts xx. 28.) We never hear of any that were made overseers or teachers, unless they were baptized with the Holy Ghost; nay, nor yet made christians.

In the next words St. Paul tells them, 'he knew that after his departing, grievous wolves would enter in, sparing not the flock, &c.' St. Paul well knew (as he again writes to Timothy) that the time would also

come that the people would heap to themselves teachers, having enticing ears, turning away their ears from the truth. Surely this is daily fulfilled in our ears. The ministers indeed keep to the same building; but both they, and the general part of their flock, are separated from their old christian principles, and are now repugnant and opposite to the articles of their own church—and enough indeed to make them, to see that these enthusiasts should claim and adhere to them as their own. Alas, it is enough to make one, like the prophet, put an ironical joke upon them, that may leave some impression behind it; for certainly these do now follow after Baal, the idol of their hearts. And we may, with the same propriety, leave some shameful joke upon them, like the prophet when he told Israel to cry aloud.

But to be brief, I shall instance in some few examples of scripture, in order more strongly to confirm this point of doctrine, and so conclude.

First, we find, according to the acts of the apostles, and the manner in which people were first admitted into the christian religion, was by no other means than by being baptized with the Holy Ghost, Christ's baptism, (Matt. iii. 11.) And indeed it is unreasonable to think of ever being made christians by any other institution.

We find, when Peter preached to Cornelius, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. (Acts x. 44.) After that he rehearses the matter to the Jews: Seeing this, saith he, 'then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.' (Acts xi. 15, 16. Matt. iii. 11.)

These words seem to imply, that St. Peter himself was ignorant of the Holy Ghost being given to the Gentiles till he saw this. And what is more amazing still, many people will not believe, that ordinary or common christians are to receive this yet, though they cannot find one christian void of it! It is true indeed we live in a happy nation, if the name of a christian were essential to salvation; but I fear this will not avail us.

Again, we find St. Peter declaring to the apostles and elders, that the Gentiles by his mouth should hear the gospel, and believe; (and note, this was the witness and testimony

testimony of their believing) 'God, which knoweth the hearts, saith he, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and hath put no difference between them and us, (that is to say, in) purifying their hearts by faith.' (Acts v. 8.)

In a word then, you find the whole body of christians were all baptized with the Holy Ghost. Yea God put no difference between them and the apostles you find, in regard to purifying their hearts by faith. There are diversities of gifts: it is true, (1 Cor. xii. 4.) and it is probable every one of these had not the gift of working miracles to be seen of men, but they all had this inseparable gift of faith, which, the apostle tells us, alone availeth before God, namely, that faith which worketh by love. Yea, St. Peter's words imply the same thing; for when he saith, 'God hath put no difference between them and us,' he is careful to repeat this, namely, 'purifying their hearts by faith.' But, says the unbeliever, if you have this gift of the Holy Spirit, why do ye not work miracles as did the apostles? and then, say they, we will believe you. In truth I may fitly apply the words of our Saviour to them: 'This is a wicked and adulterous generation, seeking a sign, but no sign shall be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonas.' (see Jonas i.) As he, through his preaching, was the occasion of the Ninevites' repentance, so let it be now also unto this people, or look not for any other sign; 'for I tell you, saith Christ, there shall be no sign given you. Remember, if the eye only be evil, the whole body is full of darkness. Therefore, if you would see the light of the gospel, you must not allow yourselves a single sin.

But friends, since you make this objection, I must tell you, these miracles, in a spiritual manner, are now daily fulfilled in our present age. How often do we find Christ casting out evil spirits unto this day! yea, whilst the ministers of Christ are preaching, the evil spirits often cry out, like them of old. But alas! it serves for the world to scoff at now, even as it did then. Therefore, as it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, &c. Remember it is man is altered, and not God; for he is unchangeable, (see Jer. xviii. 6—10.) yesterday,

to-day, and the same forever. This is the Lord's decrees: 'If ye turn unto me, saith the Almighty, I will turn unto you.' But alas! the people make the same plea now as they did in former ages; they say, 'wherein shall they turn?' (Mal. iii. 7.) It is evident there are too many of these sort of pharisaical persons yet living, that will say they see, and therefore their sin remains. (See John ix. 39—41.)

But to be short, if ever we get to heaven, we must, like the Corinthians, be washed, justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God; (1 Cor. vi. 11.) for certainly we have the same road to heaven, though they were of another nation. 'Now we, says the apostle, have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' (ch. ii. 12.) 'He that believeth on the Son of God, saith St. John, hath the witness in himself, &c.' (1 John v. 10.) Now you know a witness is an evidence to the truth. And in the foregoing verses saith he, 'If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater;' (ver. 9.) and it is 'the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.' (ver. 6.) Yea, look in what part of the scripture you will, you will find this renovation, new birth, or baptism, is the article of conclusion; and by this means ye are to judge and examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, or whether ye are of God, &c. (2 Cor. xiii. 5. 1 John iv. 3, 4.) And you see this is not a dialectical conclusion, but determinate and positive. And thus the apostle counteth it: 'for, saith he, these things have I written, that ye may know ye have eternal life.' (ch. v. 13.) Know! says the unbeliever, there is no man can know. But you find the apostle was not of their opinion, but every true christian is; for 'he knoweth that he is of God, by the Spirit which he hath given him.' (ch. iii. 24. iv. 13.) This is 'hope which maketh not ashamed, says the apostle, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given us.' (Rom. v. 5.) Thus is every christian sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. It is by this ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (See Eph. i. 13. iv. 30.)
Again,

Again, 'He hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts.' (2 Cor. i. 22.) Now what think ye is meant by the sealing of the Spirit? Why you know the only way to make a thing secure and safe (in any legal affair) is to have it sealed; thus it is with christians—they are, by being born again of the Holy Spirit, enabled to live a holy life, and an infallible seal given them. And though the letter of the law killeth, yet the Spirit giveth life: So that he which is sealed by this Spirit of promise, is made free from the law of sin and death, and a partaker of the promises; (Rom. viii. 2.) and this is the promise which he hath given us, even life eternal. (See John iii. 14, 15, 16, 36. vi. 47. xi. 26.) Therefore are we sure of salvation; not by what we can do, but by what the Lord hath done for us; knowing this time of refreshing cometh not till the Lord hath pardoned our sins through Christ: and therefore it is St. Peter intimates, 'If they would repent and be converted, their sins should be blotted out, when this time of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord.' (Acts iii. 19.) Thus it is Jesus Christ is sent unto us. It is through him we have access by one Spirit. (Eph. ii. 18.) And 'if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus dwell in you, then he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' (Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11.) At this place the apostle determines the case at once; first, by shewing it is impossible to live as is pleasing to the Lord, except we have the Spirit of God; and that without, we are none of his, but in enmity against him. (see ver. 7, 8, 9.) But on the other hand; if we have this seal of the Lord's, we shall be raised unto life by this Spirit which he hath given us. (ver. 11.) Again, 'If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.' (Gal. v. 14, 18.) Here is another freedom. And again, 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;' (2 Cor. iii. 17.) because 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' Therefore 'there is no condemnation (no none at all) to them which are in Christ Jesus.' (Rom. viii. 1.) Why, says some, this is all scripture, and it must be true: but, say they, you seem to be too sure and positive.

tive. Too sure, I ask, of what? that the promises of God are true! We acknowledge this, that it is 'by grace we are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.' (Eph. ii. 8.) And we know the gift of God is eternal life to every one that believeth. (John iii. 14, 15.) For this very purpose was Christ sent into the world; and certainly the Lord will not be frustrated of his intentions, if people are but desirous to partake of his blessing.

But to conclude this subject. St. John tells us, 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.' (1 John iii. 9.) And again, 'We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.' (ch. v. 18.) O then, says our adversaries, you are past sinning now; do what you will! Alas, friend, what have I said you thus scoff at? it is no more than scripture; therefore take heed you do not despise, for 'he that despiseth, despiseth not man but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.' (1 Thess. iv. 8.) Now if you would understand this divine and substantial truth, pray unto God for wisdom. (James i. 5.) You must understand, there is two denominations and significations to the word sin; there is the sin of the flesh, and the sin of the spirit; the sin of infirmity and weakness, the sin of obstinacy and willingness; the sin of the body, and the sin of the soul and spirit. Now this latter is the sin against God, because God is a spirit, and requireth truth in the inward parts. Now if we consider God as a spirit (John iv. 24.) in respect to our worship, it is likewise reasonable to consider him as a spirit in regard to other things; for certainly he remains a spirit still. Now they that worship God, you know, must worship him in spirit and in truth; for otherwise they do not worship him at all. And on the same account he is set free from sinning against God, that is born of his Holy Spirit; and the reason is evident, because the Holy Spirit abhors all sin, and will engage man to love God, and fear him; so that such cannot sin in spirit, because their seed remaineth in them. Therefore as St. Paul says, 'If I do that which I would not do,

do, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.' (Rom. vii.) And certain it is, the Lord will answer every one that is true of heart, that is born of his Spirit, as he did his servant Paul: 'My strength is made perfect in weakness.' (2 Cor. xii. 9.) Therefore it is impossible any man in the flesh can hurt us: for the Lord suffers a messenger of Satan frequently to buffet us, for our own good; and if we put our trust in him, his grace will be sufficient for us: being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in us, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.' (Phil. i. 6.) Knowing this, that 'if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in us; he that raised up Christ, shall also quicken our mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.' (Rom. viii. 11.) But on the other hand, 'If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' And 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be (thus) born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' (John iii. 3.)

DISCOURSE III.

On redemption.

IN order to answer this discourse as brief as I can, I shall again first make some few remarks upon it, and so conclude this head, according to my own sentiments and the word of God.

I have observed (page 42, 43.) you make these conclusions; you say, "We may justly conclude from the goodness of God, &c. that he will shut none out of the kingdom of heaven, but such, and such only, as are unqualified for pardon, &c." Alas for you and I, if we can never enter into life till we have qualified ourselves for heaven, we shall stand but a dreadful chance at the last day! The apostles could not be thus qualified for heaven; for, as St. Paul wrote to Titus, 'it is not by the works

works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved them, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' (Tit. iii. 5.) You find the apostle had need of this new birth, this supernatural grace of God; 'for it is by this ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' (Eph. ii. 8.)

But I think I need not much trouble myself to shew your weakness, seeing you yourself hath sufficiently discovered it; and indeed this is not my design, any farther than relates to the public good.

Certainly, if the Lord deals with you according to your own proposal, you have here shut yourself out of the kingdom of heaven. And again, in the next quotation, you say, "Those that obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul that doth evil." Sir, I believe it. But I would ask you, how you get free? If ever you have done evil, you bring all these curses upon yourself. Alas for you, if you are rewarded according to your words or works; and certainly this will be your case, except you repent and believe the gospel; for by thy words shalt thou be judged, &c. Again, you proceed thus: "They that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." Alas! you have cursed and damned yourself, and shut yourself out of the kingdom of heaven; all at this very place. And God grant, I say, that it may not be according to your words; but that the Lord may be pleased to open your eyes, and show you the truth as it is in Jesus!

Again, I observe you make this conclusion at the end of your book: "That Christ's merits, &c. are available only so far as we imitate it, according to our capacities." Methinks I should be glad to know your meaning. Certainly you have left your reader in great suspense concerning his task; and he will never be able to understand when he has done enough to be qualified for heaven, as you boast of. It is in vain then to work for such task-masters, as sets no bounds to our labour.

From the whole of your book then I must draw this similar allusion: It is like sending a man blindfold out in the broad world to find a lost jewel, without telling him what part of the nation to seek after it. This is next an impossible

possibility: but to strive to walk to heaven the road you have chalked out, is absolutely vain and altogether impossible; for the whole scope of your doctrine tends to no other purpose, than to lead us to the law for justification. And this is the promise that remains: 'As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse;' for it was also written of old, 'Curled is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.

I have observed (page 45.) you have had the misfortune to collect that from other authors, which serves to confute all the rest of your doctrine: and I intend to use these scriptures myself; they do not belong to the precedent part of your book.

Therefore I proceed to the doctrinal part of my discourse; first, by answering the objections which generally arise against the doctrine of justification by faith; and then conclude with my own sentiments on the nature of redemption.

First, we are told, as you observe, that "the doers of the law are justified;" and that "faith without works is dead, &c." (see Rom. ii. 13. James ii. 17, 26.) Now, in order to answer the first quotation, I must have you look to the context or verse foregoing; and if you can clear yourselves from perishing by the law, I have done with this doctrine. We are here told, that 'as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law:' so that whether you pretend to be freed by the law, if ever you have sinned, you are nevertheless under the condemnation of this law; for not the hearers of the law, but the doers (alone) are justified.

Now I hope none will presume to say, they have ever kept the law wholly and undefiled; and if they have sinned, I bring them back to the forecited verse (ver. 12.) to determine the case themselves. But perhaps some will object and say, the apostle, in the following verses, speaks of the Gentiles doing the things contained in the law, &c. I answer, this was not in an external or outward form, but by an internal principle of grace, wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God; which is evident according to the apostle's own words: 'Which shew, saith he, the

work of the law written in their hearts.' (ver. 15.) And by this means he intimates, they were freed from the law of sin and death; and, as he observes in another place, 'the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.' (2 Cor. iii.) Yea the letter of the law must first kill, before the Spirit giveth life; for the law entered that the offence might abound; and that it might become our school-master to scourge us home to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. And certain it is, God will not be frustrated of his designs; and therefore it is Christ also pointeth out the law more strict than Moses, in order to bring us to repentance. And indeed it is proper every one should know the difficulty in performing or fulfilling the law, that they might be more thankful to Christ who fulfilled it for us, and hath redeemed us from the curse and condemnation of it. Christ, like a wise physician, has a remedy for every disease: but man is like an impatient scholar, he wants to learn all at once; but Christ, like a wise master, he first points out an introduction, that may ever be of service to guide him in the way of truth. By the law is the knowledge of sin, and by this are we brought to humility and repentance; and this is a leading principle to the kingdom of God.

But to be brief; upon the words of St. James, I think, he is so far from speaking of justification by the law, he tells us, and plain as St. Paul, we are all condemned by it. 'For he that keepeth the whole law, yet offends in one point, saith he, is guilty of all.' (James ii. 10.) Alas, then who are they that are freed from the condemnation of it? Who will presume to say, he has not offended? and if he has sinned, as St. Paul says in the forecited verse, either with or without the law, he is under the condemnation of the law; yea, 'he that offends in one point, is guilty of all.' Alas! these are almost the worst parts of scripture our opposers can handle.

But to be short in answering this objection. Indeed St. James tells us, Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone; (James ii. 17.) and very evident it is also from St. Paul. But certain it is, they which have that faith which worketh by love, (Gal. v. 6.) will love to work, (as aforesaid) otherwise it is not that living faith; neither doth any other avail before God. Faith is a prolific grace,
and

and if truly sincere, it ever is productive of good works: nay, it is only the want of this which make men so deficient in their good deeds. You find by St. James's own words, that he meant, all other faith besides that which did produce good works, was dead and lifeless; and therefore could not be a living faith, nor any-ways available before God. This is evident by his allegation in Abraham, Rahab, &c. whose faith you see wrought with their works, (James ii.) and by their works was their faith made perfect, i. e. to be seen of men, to the glory of God. 'Yea, a man may say, faith he, thou hast faith, and I have works.' Yea, it is true; a man may say any thing that is as unreasonable as this; but let him know, his saying he hath faith, will not avail before him who is the searcher of the hearts; yea, even so much the words of St. James imply. 'But, faith he, shew me thy faith without thy works; (that is, if thou canst) but, faith he, I will shew you my faith by my works.' (ver. 18.)

But I hope I have already answered this objection, and therefore I now proceed to shew how we are justified by faith; and in order to this, I shall chiefly insist upon scripture demonstrations and examples.

First, we find, when Zaccheus the publican was called of Christ, he was immediately in care, how to make restitution unto all men; and certainly it was the efficacy and power of faith did this. Thus was it with faithful Lydia; having heard the sound of the gospel, she so rejoiced in the instruments, she even constrained the apostles to stay at her house. And thus was it with the jailor, after making an attempt to kill himself, (being amazed at his precipitate folly and rashness) he immediately cries out to Paul and Silas, and enquires what he should do to be saved. (Acts xvi. 27—31.) But the apostle's answer was not like our modern teachers, Do this, that, and the other good work, to procure thyself a pardon; nay but this was the answer, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thine house.' Yea it is in vain to make mention of particular instances, for we find the efficacy of faith was such that multitudes sold what they had, and made distribution as every man had need. (Acts iv. 32.) And here is the direct character of all christians, 'they were of one heart and one soul;'

(that is, in things of consequence) they so mutually agreed together: they were all brought to be of an humble, meek, and lowly heart; neither said any of them, that ought of the things he possessed was his own; nay, but they had all things in common—they no longer laid claim to any merit of their own, but willingly ascribed all glory and power unto the Lord, from whom they were inwardly sensible they received all their blessings; and if people would be christians now, they must be clothed with the same garment of humility and faithfulness.

Thus you find all these had that faith which worketh by love, which faith alone availeth before God. This was one of those grand points of doctrine our Lord delivered unto Nicodemus, viz. that he was come to offer himself as free unto us, to pardon and make atonement for our sins, and to heal our wounded souls, as the brazen serpent was offered unto the children of Israel, to heal their bodily wounds. (Num. xxi.) Yea, this was then a type of the Messiah, of which Christ is now the anti-type or fulfiller: 'For, saith he, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life; (and this he assigns as the reason:) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' (John iii. 14, 15, 16.) Again, 'He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life.' (ver. 36.) Again he repeats the same, 'Verily, I say unto ye, he that believeth on me, hath everlasting life.' (chap. vi. 47.) Again, 'Whosoever liveth and believeth on me, shall never die;' (chap. xi. 26.) that is, his soul shall not taste of death. Again, 'Verily, verily, I say unto ye, he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life,' and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

What will our adversaries say to all this? Shall we conclude after all this, that we are not justified by faith? Shall we think Christ is such an equivocator and dissembler with his people, to give us so many such deliberate promises of everlasting life for believing, when he means

no such thing? What will you imagine from all this? Surely you must needs think that if works be required, Christ knew beforehand that faith would produce them; or you must think Christ very indiscreet and forgetful to give the promise so often for believing, if he means still we shall first be doing! But however, be the case how it will, we have a good plea with Christ if we believe, for we may safely say we did what he commanded, and he hath promised life upon these very terms; and if it was his forgetfulness all this time we cannot help that, he should have taken more care what he said. Therefore let us take the kingdom of heaven by violence, as we are required. (Matt. xi. 12.) The Lord is not angry with our importunity, or eager pressing him for blessing. Beside, if we were to be set to work by a master, and he forgot half the work he intended we should do for the money he bid us, we might nevertheless rightfully call it our due what he had promised; for it would be hard for we to suffer through his mistake, when we had done what he commanded. You know a prudent master would not deal thus with his servant.

Alas, then how infamous a character will our adversaries give Christ! The poor Jews may (if this be the case) make a good plea with Christ if they had believed; for when they came and asked him, 'What they should do to work the works of God?' (it is reasonable to think he should tell them the whole truth or nothing at all) but I hear of no other command he gave them save this, and this was his answer: 'This is the work of God, to believe whom he hath sent.' (John vi. 29.) Surely then our adversaries must be in the wrong; Christ could never deserve this character they give him. O be persuaded to think better of Christ. I cannot believe him to be such a mocker of his people. Pray ye therefore, peradventure the thoughts of your hearts may be forgiven you.

This is the conclusion Christ and his apostles make: 'He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.' (John iii. 36.) And again, 'He that believeth not, shall be damned.' (Mark xvi. 16.) Alas, I dare not ease it for you—'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.' (1 John v. 10.)

Now

Now let us consider, and see how Christ deals with them that are willing to receive his testimony and promise; let us see how graciously he recommends their faith and fidelity.

What faith he to the woman of Canaan? 'O woman, faith he, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' (Matt. v. 28.) What faith he concerning the centurion? 'Verily I say unto ye, I have not found so great a faith, no not in Israel. Many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.' (ch. viii. 10, 11.) What faith he to Jarius the ruler, when he came to intreat him to cure his daughter, and though news was brought that she was dead? Yet faith he, 'Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole.' (Luke viii. 50.) What faith he to the two blind men? 'According to your faith be it unto you.' (ch. ix. 29.) Again, to the sinner that anointed his feet? 'Woman, thy faith has saved thee; go in peace.' (ch. vii. 50.) Again, to the woman that had an issue of blood, and came and privately touched his garment? 'Daughter, faith he, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace.' (ch. viii. 48.) Again, to the sick of the palsy, when he saw their faith? 'He said unto him, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.' (Mark ii. 5.) Again, to the poor man that came to intreat him for his son? 'Jesus faith unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I do believe; help thou mine unbelief!' (ch. ix. 23, 24.) Alas, poor soul, he then found the difficulty of believing, and therefore it caused the tears to flow from his eyes. But though his faith was so weak and feeble, yet you find his petition nevertheless was granted. Christ ever hath too great compassion towards his creatures, to turn them away empty, if they come with sincerity of heart; nay if our faith be as a grain of mustard-seed, it is sufficient to conduct us to the kingdom of heaven. And if we believe St. John, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to all them that believe on his name.' (John i. 12.)

Come

Come forth then, ye aduersaries; my life for yours ye are not able to gainsay nor resist this doctrine. Nay, we have greater need to reioice in believing than those happy souls I have so long been treating of; for what says our blessed Lord unto Thomas? 'Because thou hast seen me, saith he, thou hast believed; blessed are those that have not seen, and yet have believed.' (John xx. 29.) 'These things are written, saith the evangelist, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that (by) believing ye might have life through his name.' (ver. 31.) Therefore says the apostle, 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' (Rom. iv. 5.) The apostle intimates that David was not ignorant of this imputed righteousness (which is made so much scoff at) when he says, 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.' (Ps. xxxii. 1.) The apostle did not desire them to believe his bare word, but he refers them to the ancient scriptures for a determination in this so grand a truth. But alas, we find the authority both of prophets and apostles is not sufficient to convince the unbelieving. See the promises of old. 'The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servant, and none that trusteth in him shall be desolate.' (Isa. xlv. 21. xliii. 14.) Again, 'I, even I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.' (Hos. xiii. 4.) Again, the Lord speaking of the person of Christ, saith, 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people.' (Isa. xlii. 6.) Again, 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, (and how?) because he shall bear their iniquity; and because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; he bare the sins of many, and maketh intercession for the transgressors.' (ch. liii. 11, 12.) Again, 'This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, (yea and a blessed one indeed!) and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.' (ch. liv. 17.) Yea, 'this is the name wherewith he shall be called, (yea it is fit the name should describe the nature, for he is) THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!' (Jer. xxiii. 16. xxiii. 6.) 'In that day, says the prophet, surely shall one say, in the Lord have I
righ-

righteousness.' (Isa. xlv. 24.) So you find, we that hold imputed righteousness, do no more than fulfil the prophet's prediction—Therefore we will yet say, in the Lord have we righteousness. Even to him, says the prophet, shall men come (come, for what? why) for righteousness and strength. Yea, happy are those that will submit to this righteousness of God! (See Rom. i. 17. iii. 21.) For all that are incensed against him, shall be ashamed; yea, brought to utter confusion. But alas! where will our adversaries then appear? Therefore, 'Hearken, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness, (if you did but know it; but behold) I bring near my righteousness.' (Isa. xlv. 12, 13.) This is a righteousness that shall not be abolished. (See Isa. li. 4—9.) 'This is the righteousness of God which is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.' (See Rom. iii. 21—29.)

Surely then, since this imputed righteousness, or righteousness of God, is witnessed both by the law and the prophets; and not only so, but an inspired apostle's opinion also to confirm it: surely then I say, we have no reason to doubt of the truth and veracity of it. Surely these few texts must be sufficient to make our opposers put their hands before their faces. As for me, O Lord, 'I will (with thy servant David) go in thy strength; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.' (Ps. lxxi. 16.) This is the everlasting righteousness the prophet Daniel spake of. (Dan. ix. 24.) This is the obedience of one, by which many are made righteous; yea even all that believe. (See Rom. v. 19.) And 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, (that is, his righteousness is no longer of himself, but he sees) all things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath given unto us the word of reconciliation.' (2 Cor. v. 16—21.) 'And thou shalt call his name Jesus, (for this reason) because he shall save his people

people from their sins.' (Matt. i. 21.) Therefore, with triumphant joy, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' (John i. 29.) 'To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth, shall receive remission of their sins.' (Acts x. 43. see ch. xiii. 38, 39.) Indeed we may now fitly use the same exhortation the apostle did—'Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your days, which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you;' (Acts xiii. 40, 41.) and indeed so we find it fulfilled. 'This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. (This is that precious stone the prophet spake of); neither is there salvation in any other.' (ch. iv. 11, 12.) 'In him we receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.' (1 Pet. i. 9.) 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, (that is, by his Spirit that dwelleth in us) should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye are healed.' (ver. 24. see Isa. liii. 5.) 'For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' (2 Cor. v. 21.) And 'this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' (1 Tim. i. 15.) Therefore if we sincerely and sorrowfully 'confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins (according to his word) and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' (1 John i. 9.) 'I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you, for his name's sake;' (ch. ii. 12.) and surely then my writing will find acceptance. 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that you should not sin. And if any man sin, (that is, through weakness) we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins, &c.' (ver. 1, 2.) 'And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him was no sin.' (ch. iii. 5.) So that in him we are completely righteous, and free from sin; being baptized with his Holy Spirit. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, (for by nature we are enemies to him) but

that he loved us, and sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins.' (ch. iv. 10.) 'And by him are ye justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses;' (Acts xiii. 39.) no, for by that shall no flesh be justified. 'But ye are washed, justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God;' (1 Cor. vi. 11.) for 'if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.' (Gal. v. 18.) 'He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, &c.' (Gal. i. 4.) 'And ye are compleat in him, which is the head of all principality and power.' (Col. ii. 10.) 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' (Rom. v. 1.) 'Being justified by his grace, we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.' (Tit. iii. 7.) 'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.' (Gal. ii. 16.) 'The law was our school-master to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.' (ch. iii. 24.) Thus 'was Christ delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.' (Rom. iv. 25.) 'Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are (or think to be) justified by the law; (nay) ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, (nay, nor no such external forms) but faith which worketh by love.' (Gal. v. 4—7.) And it is through the Spirit we receive this faith; and it is through this faith we have the hope of eternal life. 'Now the just shall live by faith;' (Heb. x. 38. Hab. ii. 4.) and they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. 'I am not ashamed, says the apostle, of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, (and this is the reason:) for therein is the righteousness of God revealed (not man's righteousness or good works in order to save him, but the righteousness of God) from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' (Rom. i. 16, 17.) Yea, 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' (Rom. x. 4.) Believeth what? Why, this righteousness of God, which is witnessed both by the law and the prophets: so 'that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth is confession made unto salvation. (And the apostle doth not leave us

to ruminate on his word only, but again brings antient authority to confirm it :) For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth in him, shall not be ashamed; (ver. 9, 10, 11.) and therefore are we so confident, and in the world's eye so presumptuous.

But alas! where are our adversaries? 'Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?' (1 Cor. i. 20. see Isa. xxix. 14. xxxiii. 18.) I challenge you with the words of Christ, (that with all your artful syllogisms and sceptic suppositions) you are not able to gainsay nor resist this doctrine. (see Luke xxi. 15.) Here is a covering from the Lord to hide your nakedness; but alas, thou sayest, vain worldling! that 'I am rich, and increased in goods; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' (Rev. iii. 17.) Certainly our nations are in the state of the Laodiceans, or worse: but alas! they will not believe they have need of this white raiment, (the righteousness of Christ) to clothe them. (ver. 18.) Nay, but they will say, with the Pharisees of old, that 'they see, and therefore their sin remains.' (John ix. 41.)

Such you cannot, you dare not any longer say, we "come in sheep's clothing." Nay, but we bring forth this disagreeable news, like the prophets of old, that ye must repent, or perish; and we testify of the world, that the works thereof are wicked. 'Yea, says St. John, we know that the whole world lieth in wickedness.' But 'how can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh of God only? (John v. 44.) How then can ye believe, whilst you boast of your own wisdom, learning, &c.? Certainly this is not rendering all praise, honour, power, and glory, unto God, unto whom it is due; and therefore ye cannot expect that he should bless you with a lively faith: for when he hath given us this, he hath given us the blessing annexed to it, and that is, eternal life.

If you ask the moralist or Pharisee, whether he believes in Christ? Believe! yes, says he. But ask him another question, you will be sure to catch him in a lie; for ask him, if he is sure of eternal life, he cannot say it, though Christ hath so positively and repeatedly promised it to all, or whosoever believeth. Surely it must be an untruth to say, we believe a person, if we do not believe what he says. Alas! they believe in Christ, as the Jews believed in Moses; they believe there was such a person as Christ, but they do not believe the things related of him. The Jews were exceeding angry with Christ when he told them, they did not believe in God, nor in Moses; for indeed they knew their religion derived from Moses: just in like manner
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the people are angry; if we tell them, they do not believe in Christ; because they know the religion they profess first derived from him: but at the same time they are content with a mere speculative knowledge of him, and remain utterly ignorant of what service he is to them. The Jews could rest in the outward ordinances, which were only types, and nothing real and solid: so the nominal christian can rest with an outside profession, taking the mere shadow for the substance. O be persuaded to ponder these things in your minds, and remember if you are walking the road to the celestial city, you must take the word of God for a pilot to conduct you safe into harbour!—But to conclude the nature of our redemption, I must offer a few more scriptures to your consideration, leaving you to the blessing of God for a true understanding. Now 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' (Gal. iii. 13.) 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' (Rom. iii. 24.) Again, 'In him have we redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.' (Eph. i. 7.) Here is the glorious doctrine of free grace! Yea it is by the 'Holy Spirit we are sealed (and made secure and safe in the Lord) unto the day of redemption.' (Eph. iv. 30.) He came 'to give his life a ransom for many.' (Matt. xx. 28.) Yea he 'gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' (1 Tim. ii. 6.) 'He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' (1 Cor. i. 30.) Yea, he is all in all; and therefore the apostle was determined to know nothing but Jesus, and him crucified. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' (Col. i. 14.) 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.' (Tit. ii. 14.) 'He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained (not only present, but) eternal redemption for us.' He did not, like the high-priest, (which was only a shadow of his ministerial office) enter into the Sanctum sanctorum, or holy of holies, once a year, &c. but once for all, 'having abolished in his flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances,' (Eph. ii. 15.) that otherwise would have condemned us to utter destruction. Thus are we redeemed not 'with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without spot or blemish.' (1 Pet. i. 18.) And therefore the saints sung a new song, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.'

Thus I conclude (with respect to man's salvation) in the words of a dear and dying Redeemer:

IT IS FINISHED.